

Message Text

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47

ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-15 COME-00 EB-06 LAB-03 SIL-01 DRC-01 /074 W

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R 151321Z OCT 74

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3521

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY NBABANE

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

ANCONSUL DURBAN 674

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARUUES

UNCLAS JOHANNESBURG 1057

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SF

SUBJ: ONE KILLED & TWENTY-THREE INJURED IN "FACTION FIGHT"

AT EAST RAND PROPRIETARY MINE (ERPM) IN GERMISTON

1. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS FIGHT BETWEEN TWO MINERS, ONE MALAWIAN AND OTHER MOSOTHO, AT ERPM'S SOUTHWESTERN COMPOUND ON SUNDAY NIGHT, OCTOBER 13, DEVELOPED INTO FULL-FLEDGED "FACTION FIGHT" REQUIRING INTERVENTION OF LARGE NUMBERS OF HELMETED POLICE ARMED WITH STEN GUNS, RIFLES AND TEAR GAS.

2. TOLL WAS ONE MINER HACKED TO DEATH & TWENTY-THREE OTHERS INJURED WITH CONSIDERABLE DAMAGE IN FORM OF BROKEN WINDOWS AND DOORS.

3. POLICE REMAINED ON PREMISES THROUGHOUT OCTOBER 14 TO PREVENT
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RENEWAL OF FIGHTING.

4. COMMENT: SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS LATEST GOLD MINE "FACTION FIGHT" IS THAT IT INVOLVED LARGE NUMBERS OF MALAWIANS AT A TIME WHEN MALAWI (WHICH WAS PRINCIPAL FOREIGN SUPPLIER OF CONTRACT LABOR TO SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD MINES UNTIL PRESIDENT BANDA IMPOSED BAN LAST APRIL) IS ENGAGED IN POLITICALLY SENSITIVE NEGOTIATIONS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN MINE AUTHORITIES ON TERMS AND CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH IT MIGHT AGREE TO LIFT BAN. IMPORTANCE OF MALAWIAN LABOR TO SOUTH AFRICAN GOLD MINING INDUSTRY ILLUSTRATED BY FACT THAT IN 1973 IT CONSTITUTED ABOUT 30 PERCENT OF TOTAL BLACK GOLD MINE LABOR FORCE OF 384,000.
GUTHRIE

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Disposition Event:
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